

Breznys's Real Solutions

Author and astrologist puts paranoia in its place. ■ By Vanessa Salvia

Rob Breznys is a popular astrologer and the author of three books, the most recent being *Pronoia Is the Antidote For Paranoia: How the Whole World Is Conspiring to Shower You With Blessings*. In it, Breznys takes aim at the mass media's approach to reporting only tragedy and trauma as inherently interesting news and suggests ways to debilitate this negativity in your own life and focus on the positive. This is his first appearance at the Oregon Country Fair.

He is speaking at 3:20 pm Friday, July 7 on the Main Stage and at 3 pm Sunday, June 9 on the Front Porch.

You live in Southern California but you've been to Eugene before. Tell me about your relationship to Eugene.

I was a homeless person in Eugene for a brief period in 1976. I was living in North Carolina and I reconnoitered to the West Coast to try to figure out whether I wanted to live in Santa Cruz, Eugene or Seattle. I was trying to save money, and Eugene was a fun place to be homeless at that point. I slept on the roofs of hotels and in the park and hung around the big college campus more than I should have probably. I still have family in Eugene.

Most people probably know you as the author of Free Will Astrology. How did you move toward socio-political authorship?

My column has always been more than an astrology column since the beginning, and I aspire to make it something more than the tabloid mentality that informs most astrology columns. I wanted to bring socio-political commentary and humor and philosophical fun into it, so I've been doing that for many years.

What is "pronoia"?

Pronoia is a word that was coined by the Grateful Dead lyricist John Perry Barlow in 1976. He said it meant "the sneaking suspicion that other people are plotting in your behalf." The word just sort of sat there for a long time. Nobody really defined it and ran with it and developed the term until I wrote the book.

As you say in your book, the media have defined corruption and decay as interesting. Why have they done that, and what can we do about it?

I think they've gotten the notion that it sells more advertising, that it attracts more eyes, the notion that the spectacular consists entirely of painful twists and ugly events, and I think at this point it's more of an addiction. People get caught in habitual modes of hurting themselves, being hungry for any kind of feeling even if it's a painful feeling.

I think one way to counteract that is to first of all, refute the notion, identify the covert dogma ... that evil is more interesting and far more common than good, beauty and bliss and integrity and joy. So, our first job is to say that that's so, and begin to find other modes in our personal lives and whatever realm we are given to work in. That can be as simple an act as deciding to write a manifesto of all the things that work in your life. I think people should not only do that but add to it all the time. It's pretty amazing how many things go right for you every day and that the vast majority of things that happen to you are a yes, not a no.

So one of the first steps would be to recognize this power the media have and counteract it by focusing on the positive in your own life.

Wise people have said that you don't want to spend all of your time fighting it, but you do need to spend some of your time fighting and counteracting that. You also have to embody and create and be exuberant in the creation of the alternative and really that's mostly what my book is about.

It's an attempt to create the foundation of a pronoic world in which we're no longer complaining and bitching and protesting, which we need to do, and I don't mean to demean that at all ... but we also have to be exuberant lovers of life and live as if life is a miracle.

What can audiences expect at this year's Country Fair?

I do a performance called "Sacred Uproar," and it has a blend of rowdy prayers, chaotic meditations, interactive rituals, what I call Dionysian Manifestos, good-humored incantations and rants, but not so much the angry kind of rants although there is a little anger in there, but more tender rants. I do *kirtans* [sacred call-and-response chanting]. It's a pagan revival show from one point of view. The sense is that it's spiritual, but there's political activism in it too. There's joy and pleasure and sacred uproar! ■



a shield against those who oppress and enslave, and to attempt to give a voice to the people, animals and wilderness who struggle for life... the poetry of everyone.

Rob Breznys is a cultural hero, communicating a myth-savvy perspective and breathing new life into zodiac advice columns. His rowdy astrology column "Free Will Astrology" has been the most widely syndicated feature in North America's alternative. Breznys's new book is "Pronoia Is the Antidote for Paranoia: How the Whole World Is Conspiring to Shower You with Blessings." In addition to three books, Breznys has created four music albums and is working on a fifth. His band World Entertainment War recorded for MCA and was nominated for a Bammie, California's version of the Grammys.



Surya Kramer

Scott Huckabay is a sonic alchemist crafting acoustic-trance soundscapes. Musically, Huckabay lives and breathes as a one-man-band on stage, where he communes with his lovingly battered Taylor K20 acoustic guitar, live looping and layering acoustic rhythms and percussive textures into a rich, holistic union. Huckabay's passionate performance rituals emit a shamanistic spiritual vibe as well, often culminating with his spinning like a cosmic dervish, his hands a rapid blur around his guitar.

Stuart Cowan, Ph.D., is a Principal of Sustainable Systems Design, offering design, development, and finance services internationally for large-scale sustainability projects. Stuart recently helped to launch a sustain-

able investment bank in Portland, for green real estate projects, sustainable businesses, and restoration forestry. He served as Research Director at EcoTrust and led the development of a comprehensive framework for local living economies and bioregional sustainability. Stuart is the co-author of *Ecological Design*, a visionary overview of the integration of ecology and architecture, land use planning, and product design.

Surya Kramer is a teacher/facilitator, performing artist/ritual activist activator. Community building is the foundation of her work. Her honest, sincere work is intended to ignite the spirit and expand the soul for collective conversation.

Winona LaDuke was raised in Ashland, Ore. She graduated from Harvard and Antioch Universities with a degree in native economic development and a masters in rural development. At age 18, Winona LaDuke spoke before the United Nations on Native American issues. She is a founding member of Women of All Red Nations and the Black Hills Alliance. She directs the Land Recovery Project on the White Earth Reservation in

Minnesota, a community-based effort to recover native land, culture and environment. She is president of the Indigenous Women's Network and director of Honor the Earth Fund, a national foundation and advocacy organization that supports Native environmental work. LaDuke was the Green Party candidate for the vice president of the United States of America in 1996 & 2000.



Winona LaDuke

SPOKEN WORD STAGE SCHEDULE

TIME	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
FRONT PORCH			
12pm	Stuart Cowen	Winona LaDuke	Scott Huckabay
1pm	Asha Deliverance	Hira Ratan Manek	Hira Ratan Manek
2pm	Hira Ratan Manek	Scott Huckabay	Melanie Duchin
3pm	David Room	Paul Stamets	Rob Breznys
4pm	Mark Thompson	Kevin Danaher	Surya Ru Kramer
5pm	Melanie Duchin	Amy Goodman	Dolphin Embassy
6pm	Surya Ru Kramer		
RABBIT HOLE			
12pm	Nancy Preblich	Riot Folk Collective	Doug Green, Sarah
1pm	Morgan Brent	Donald Abrams, M.D.	Rich & Nancy Preblich
2pm	Donald Abrams, M.D.	Melanie Duchin	Alder Fuller
3pm	Cho'Qosh	Cho'Qosh	Nassim Hamein
4pm	Nassim Hamein	David Room	Cho'Qosh
5pm	Dolphin Embassy	Alder Fuller	Mark Thompson
6pm		John Halpern	
SPIRIT TOWER			
12pm	Jefferson Smith	Iana Matthews-Harris	Daanan Andrew
1pm	Kevin Whilden	Iana Matthews-Harris	Daanan Andrew
2pm	Kipchoge	Diane Patterson	Eugene Slam Team
3pm	Nucleus	Dave Lippman	Dave Lippman
4pm	Eugene Slam Team	Kipchoge	Daniel Finnigan
5pm	Nucleus	Blane Lyon	Big Tadoo Puppet
6pm			Blane Lyon
CHEZ RAY'S NEXT STAGE			
1pm	Big Tadoo Puppet	David Oaks	Diane Pattterson
2pm	Dave Lippman	Morgan Brent	Nucleus
3pm	Riot Folk Collective	Daniel Finnigan	Riot Folk Collective
4pm	Kipchoge	Eugene Slam Team	Kipchoge
5pm		Big Tadoo Puppet	

• Spoken Word performances will also be on the Mainstage. Check the Peach Pit or www.oregoncountryfair.org for details.